2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

CHAP. XXVIII.

Long looked for dinner appears to be ready; for the heated woman now emerges into the open air, and the men and boys enter the hut, leaving the females to prolong the talk. When each member of the community has in turn, eaten, and the offerings to bhumi tai have been swept out of doors, the whole family in the village join grouped about in primitive dinginess, and quiet unconspicuous attitude; some under the veranda eaves, others on the thar, or under its quiet shelter: and there rehearse the day's events. The naked pálkarpál also, having completed his separate cooking, squats apart upon the wall, whence he can hear the news and add his distant note to the conversation.

And thus the shades of evening close in upon them. The air grows chill, and the careful mother of the smallest, rises to take the infant she has kept under her dress, into the well baked house. She stops a moment: looks round to the sky where the flushing moon, ascending vertically through the trees in hot pursuit of the now vanished sun, illumines her womanly face. 'Swámi, Swámi!' she mutters, with hands to forehead, supporting the while, her young one in the bend of her arm, 'Mokh ultama, ellam ultama:' and stoops in at the little doorway. Two or three sleepy-headed children soon stagger in after her. Note the pretty daughter in her teens, plump and white teethed, with hair tightly curled, and eyes that brilliantly catch the sparkle of the moon. She has been taught to say her prayers: but unmarried and without a care, the sense of responsibility is not strong upon her; she has no child to shiver for. She gives a rather hurried salute, bringing her head down to her hands, rather than take the young arms out of their envelope in the chill: a quick 'Éyan, appa!' and in she ducks, shutting the door after her. A prolonged rustle may be heard as the brood settle themselves in the dark, to rest on the warm hearth; with a mantle on the floor and another covering all their nakedness. The healthy baby, with eyes wide open, trying in vain to penetrate the gloom, disturbs the mother on the raised bed, who is now